

Food, Nutrition & Health

Topic: Convenience Foods (Form 4&5)

Objectives:

- What are convenience foods?
- What are the convenience food categories?
- What about fast food?
- What are some advantages and disadvantages of convenience foods?
- Why do some people object to convenience foods?
- Convenience Foods for Easier Healthy Eating (View Video); *explores some common convenience foods, what makes them convenient and factors to consider when selecting convenience foods to make them healthier.*
- Activity Sheet!

What are convenience foods?

Foods that are processed and partly or totally prepared by a food manufacturer, so that they are either ready to eat or require minimal preparation by the consumer.

What are the convenience food categories?

For simplicity, convenience foods can be divided into six (6) groups according to the readiness for eating. They are dehydrated, ready to eat, canned, frozen, cook-chill foods and ready-prepared meals.

Types of Convenience Food	Examples
Dehydrated	Mashed potato, baby foods, porridge, soups, mixes for cakes
Ready to eat	Biscuits, puddings, salads e.g. coleslaw, cheese spreads, preserves
Canned	Pre-cooked soup, fruit pie filling, sausages, pulses in sauce e.g. beans, fish e.g. sardines
Frozen	Pastry, cold sweets e.g. mousses and ice-cream, casseroles, pizzas, wantons
Cook-chill foods	Sauces, soups, fresh pasta, main courses e.g. lasagne and seafood pies.
Ready-prepared meals	Main courses e.g. rice dishes e.g. Annie Chun's Microwaveable Thai Fried Rice, bolognese

What about fast food?

Fast food is ready to eat foods. It is prepared, cooked and served by an outlet who can have it available very quickly. The most popular types of fast foods are: sandwiches (including burgers), fish and chips, pizzas, Chinese food, chicken and chips and Indian food.

What are some advantages and disadvantages of Convenience Foods?

Advantages:

- Quick and easy to prepare
- Saves time and fuel.
- Easy to store and useful for taking on holiday trips.
- Can be kept for emergencies.
- Wide variety available.
- There is usually little waste.
- They often have extra nutrients added.

Disadvantages:

- They may be more expensive than fresh foods.
- Too many processed and refined foods in the diet which may limit the intake of NSP (dietary fibre).
- Servings in convenience meals may not be adequate for individual satisfaction, making it necessary to buy extra and which defeats the objectives.
- Nutrients may be lost during processing and not replaced.
- They may have high levels of fat, sugar and sodium.

Why do some people object to convenience foods?

Some people object to processed and refined convenience foods on the grounds that they are not as nutritious as fresh foods and contain additives which are not naturally found in foods.

Convenience Foods for Easier Healthy Eating

Explores some common convenience foods, what makes them convenient and factors to consider when selecting convenience foods to make them healthier. VIEW VIDEO here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e1jbIWWJc4g>

ACTIVITY SHEET**SECTION 1 – Shade the correct answer.**

1. Which of the following best defines convenience foods?
 - a. Foods that are processed and partly or totally prepared by a manufacturer that need little or no further preparation before being consumed.
 - b. Foods that are completely prepared and require only reheating and or serving.
 - c. Foods that have had some processing to make them easier to prepare.

2. Some convenience foods may have little nutritional value. That is why it is important to
 - I. Only eat convenience foods
 - II. Read the nutritional label
 - III. Select convenience foods with high levels of fat, sugar and salt.
 - IV. Choose convenience foods in moderation.
 - a. I and III
 - b. II and IV
 - c. All of the above

3. What are fast foods?
 - a. Foods that have had some processing to make them easier to prepare.
 - b. Foods that are bought ready to eat and require no further processing.
 - c. Foods that are processed and partly or totally prepared by a manufacturer that need little or no further preparation before being consumed.

SECTION 2 – Read the following examples carefully and try to determine which category of convenience foods it most suitably belongs to.

Dehydrated	Ready to eat	Canned
Frozen	Cook-chill foods	Ready-Prepared
Meals		

Uncle Ben’s microwaveable Ready Rice	
Tesco Fish Pie	
Frozen pre-cooked pastry crust	
A tin of pre-cooked soup	
Tuna Caesar Salad	
A box of cake mix	

SECTION 3 – Short answer questions

1. Identify two (2) factors you can utilize when shopping for/preparing convenience foods to make them healthier.

- a.
-
- b.
-

2. Identify three (3) advantages and three (3) disadvantages of convenience foods:

Advantages:

- a.
.....
- b.
.....
- c.
.....

Disadvantages:

- a.
.....
- b.
.....
- c.
.....

End of Activity Sheet

ACTIVITY “ANSWER SHEET”**SECTION 1 – Shade the correct answer.**

1. Which of the following best defines convenience foods?
 - a. Foods that are processed and partly or totally prepared by a manufacturer that need little or no further preparation before being consumed.
 - b. Foods that are completely prepared and require only heating and or serving.
 - c. Foods that have had some treatment to make them easier to prepare.

2. Some convenience foods may have little nutritional value. That is why it is important to
 - I. Only eat convenience foods
 - II. Read the nutritional label
 - III. Select convenience foods with high levels of fat and salt.
 - IV. Choose convenience foods in moderation.
 - a. I and III
 - b. II and IV
 - c. All of the above

3. What are fast foods?
 - a. Foods that have had some treatment to make them easier to prepare.
 - b. Foods that are bought ready to eat and require no further processing.
 - c. Foods that are processed and partly or totally prepared by a manufacturer that need little or no further preparation before being consumed.

SECTION 2 – Read the following examples carefully and try to determine which category of convenience foods it most suitably belongs to.

Dehydrated	Ready to eat	Canned
Frozen	Cook–chill foods	Ready–Prepared Meals
Uncle Ben’s microwaveable Ready Rice		Ready–Prepared Meals
Tesco Fish Pie		Cook–chill foods
Frozen pre-cooked pastry crust		Frozen
A tin of pre-cooked soup		Canned
Tuna Caesar Salad		Ready to eat
A box of cake mix		Dehydrated

SECTION 3 – Short answer questions

1. Identify two (2) factors you can utilize when shopping for/preparing convenience foods to make them healthier.
 - a. Read labels to ensure that you are selecting products without excessive amounts of sodium, sugar, fillers, oil etc.
 - b. Purchase “low salt versions” or “no salt added”.

Answers may also include:

- Drain and rinse canned beans in a colander before using to reduce sodium content and control how they are seasoned.
- Plain options are better compared to flavoured varieties e.g. rice as it may have a high sodium content and flavour additives.

2. Identify three (3) advantages and three (3) disadvantages of convenience foods:

Advantages:

- a. Quick and easy to prepare and save time and fuel.
- b. Easy to store and useful for taking on holiday.
- c. Can be kept for emergencies.

Answers may also include:

- Wide variety available.
- There is usually little waste.
- They often have extra nutrients added.

Disadvantages:

- a. They may be more expensive than fresh foods.
- b. Too many processed and refined foods in the diet may limit the intake of NSP (dietary fibre).
- c. Servings in convenience meals may not be adequate, making it necessary to buy extra, which defeats the objectives.

Answers may also include:

- Nutrients may be lost during processing and not replaced.
- They may have high levels of fat and sugar.

References:

Jospeh, T. (2016, September 14). Tips and Tricks to Gelatin Success [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJgcZzGLLPA>

Tull, A. & Coward, A. (2016). Caribbean Food and Nutrition for CSEC. Oxford University Press.